

India emerging as teleradiology hub

New Delhi: With a large pool of well-trained doctors and high-tech infrastructure, India is fast emerging as a teleradiology hub, providing offshore X-Ray reporting services to the US, Europe, Singapore and Middle East.

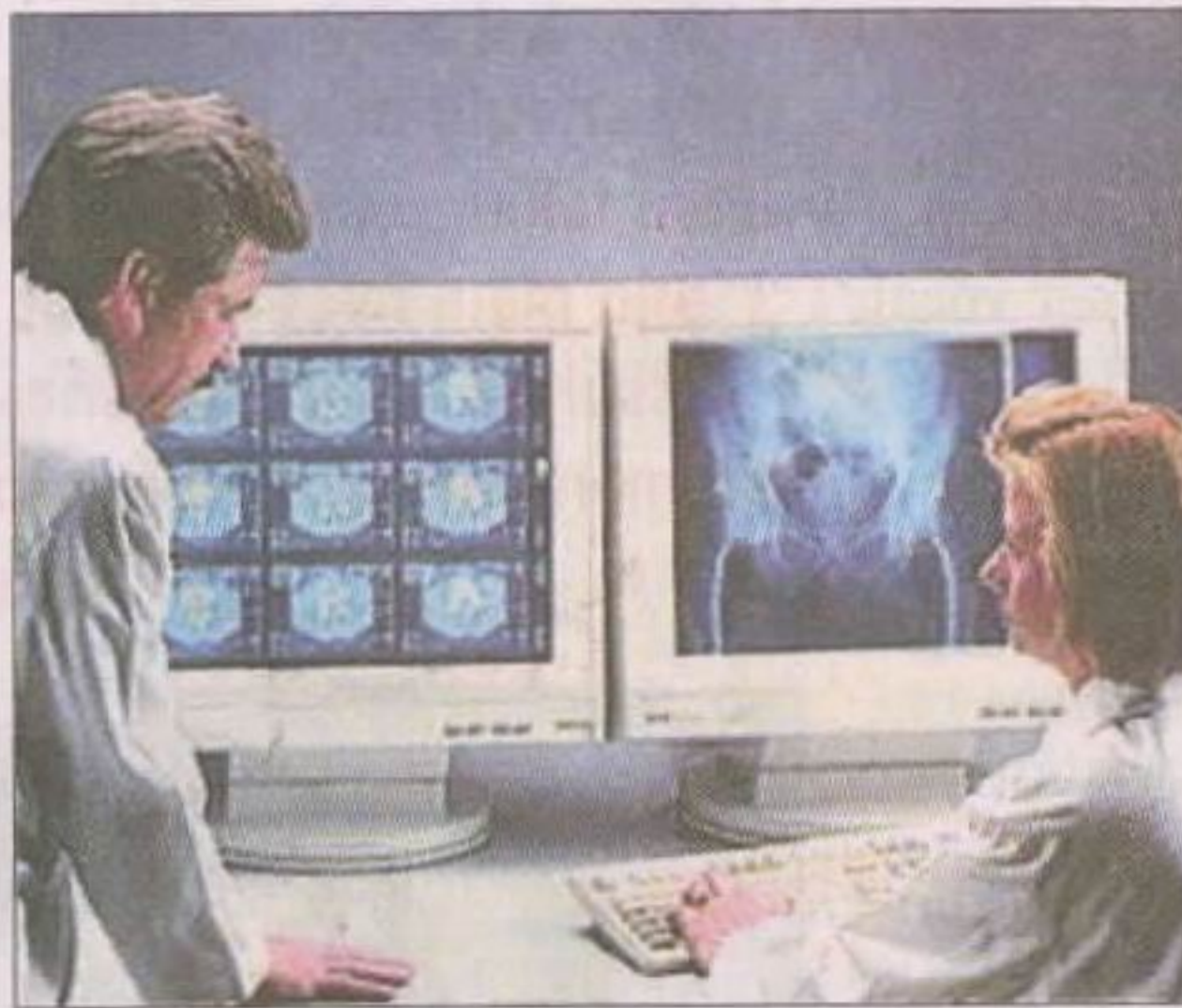
Teleradiology means electronic transmission of radiological images, such as X-Rays, CTs and MRIs from one location to another for the purpose of interpretation and consultation.

In fact, with teleradiology, there are no geographic boundaries.

According to estimates, the US is facing a shortage of radiologists with 20 per cent of vacancies going unfilled in hospitals and increased imaging scan numbers related to a growing aged population.

"There is a worldwide shortage of qualified radiologists and teleradiology counters this shortage by providing services from one area to another. It can be used to cover the night shift from another geographic zone or to cover remote areas where there are CT or other scanners but no radiologists to interpret the results," says Dr Sunita Maheshwari, Director, Telerad Solutions, Bangalore, which is pioneer in teleradiology.

"India has an optimal time advantage with the US in terms of providing emergency night shift services to the American



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hospitals. We also possess high technology infrastructure base, a large pool of well-trained doctors, skilled manpower and a lower cost of living," Dr Maheshwari said.

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"The scope of teleradiology is enormous. One doctor sitting in a centralised reading facility can cover several hospitals at the same time making this a very efficient use of a radiologists time and skill," says Dr Maheshwari.

However, Dr Yatish Agarwal, a medical specialist at Safdarjung Hospital here says "the scope is limited because of certification problems. Only those doctors who have relocated from US, can do offshoring to America. Such restrictions also exist in many European countries. Thus our Indian doctors who have relocated from these countries can only do this job. Within India also, the scope of teleradiology is immense. But the remote areas have limitations of infrastructure, Dr Maheshwari says. Teleradiology is already working in Bijapur, Raipur and some backward areas also. "We have also started doing it for a hospital in Kerala and remote areas in Karnataka," she says.